

On the RISE Horizon

NEBRASKA STATE PROBATION

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The RISE Program: Educational Groups, Not Job Placement: by Kari Rumbaugh, RISE Program Director



RISE is Group Focused!

The RISE Program is an excellent opportunity for probationers in rural areas of Nebraska. The RISE Specialist is located in the probation office and available for all probationers. Focused around group work, the RISE program is set up by the RISE Specialist, with individual groups available when necessary.

There are three tracks for the RISE Program. Probationers

can attend one or more tracks depending on their need. First, the employment track includes the Specialist teaching probationers how to locate, apply for and successfully maintain employment. Second, the education track consists of the Specialist teaching probationers how to earn their GED and how to look into post high school opportunities this includes: teaching how to apply for school, what financial options are available and even taking probationers on college tours. Finally, the juvenile school support track involves Specialists working with juveniles struggling in school by teaching them about learning

styles, test-taking skills, motivation and setting goals.

As you can see, the RISE Program is much more than a job placement program. With the tools learned during the RISE Program, probationers are already benefiting. Although the RISE Program is only in its second year the employment and educational tracks have already shown success. Of the probationers who completed the program prior to March 1, 2009, 79% of those on the employment track and 66% of those on the educational track have not returned to the probation system a year after graduating from the RISE Program.

Explaining the Program to Probationers: by Jennifer Hanisch, RISE Specialist

It is not always easy to explain new programs to probationers and get buy-in. Here are some helpful hints for all probation officers to use when discussing the RISE Program with your probationers.

As a term of probation, probationers are required to be gain-

fully employed or seeking employment. The probation officer makes the referrals and there is no cost to the probationer.

RISE is a support system to help probationers achieve education and employment goals. This may mean looking for a new job, getting a

better job, completing a GED, looking into college or graduating from high school.

When the program is completed, certificates are given. The RISE Specialist will continue to follow progress by contacting the probationer three and six months after graduation from the program.



RISE Program Goal

The **RISE** program will reduce recidivism through improving education and employment opportunities for probationers in rural areas of Nebraska.

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**RISE Program Week #6:
Meeting Employers
Expectations.**

**“Participants
will use
these new-
found skills
to RISE
to their
FUTURE.”**



Importance of Completing the Program: **by Emily Kirschenmann, RISE Specialist**

Once probationers are referred to the RISE Program, it is very important they complete the program in its entirety as indicated by the screening assessment as administered by the Program Specialist. It is not recommended that once a probationer obtains employment that he/she be allowed to stop attending the RISE Program and groups. However, Specialists will reschedule meetings with probationers to work around their employment schedule.

The different subjects covered contain information that will not only be useful in seeking and obtaining employment, but also will be valuable in-

formation probationers can continue to use once their term of probation is completed. Some of those subjects are: budgeting, applications, interviews and overcoming barriers to employment.

One of the most effective groups is Week Six. The topic of Week Six is Meeting Employers' Expectations. During this group, discussion and activities focus on three main objectives:

- 1) Identify strategies to meet employers' expectations;
- 2) Identify strategies for working through criticism (negative and constructive);

- 3) Identify strategies to effectively resolve workplace conflict/problems.

As RISE Specialists, we have observed numerous situations where probationers stop coming to groups once they are employed and end up coming back for assistance because they have been fired or quit their jobs. This is why Week Six is so important. By continuing to come to class, probationers are also able to receive continued support from the group and specialist. By completing the entire program they are able to prove to themselves and others they are able to follow through and complete something.

Great Story: **by Rebecca Miranda, RISE Specialist**

The RISE program is not just an “extra class” that a probationer has to take. My name is Rebecca Miranda and I am the RISE Specialist in Dakota City, Nebraska.

One of the juveniles I was working with came into the group with the worst attitude you could possibly imagine. He had a rude answer for everything. He was really bringing down the group. So, I decided to do one-on-one meetings with him until he

changed his attitude. He started participating very well. His grades improved tremendously and his behavior in school improved greatly.

At the end of the program, he asked me if he could keep coming to the meetings because he felt the classes were keeping him out of trouble and helping him in school. He started meeting with me two days a week; one day in the group, and the other day

just by himself.

This juvenile is a great example of what the RISE program is all about. We are here to help people turn their lives around and start seeing their future possibilities. This young man didn't even want to finish high school and now he is talking about going to college. Sometimes, young people just need a little encouragement for them to believe in themselves.